



Pinal Partnership Breakfast

Remarks by Gov. Jan Brewer

Friday, May 14, 2010

I love coming to Pinal County.

Thank you for inviting me.

I have been looking forward to this for some time.

During the last real estate boom -- and at least until in 2009 -- you were still ranked as one of the fastest growing counties in the country.

And, despite the slow-down, I think you can still take great pride in what you have done.

I was talking to Jordan Rose who said that your Pinal County Planning has had a tremendous work load, yet, despite that, those volunteer commissioners nevertheless enforced some very high standards on any approvals.

Good for them.

Your elected officials insisted on quality development and your staffs clearly went out of their way to make sure every developer knew what was expected.

You gained a reputation for being very careful to only approve developments that were unique or had some sort of creative element in them.

My hat is off to you for holding to those standards. It shows just how important local control decisions are.

I know that the fruits of your labors in good planning have been slow to blossom.

But, let me tell you what I see.

When I took over as Governor a year ago, I was faced with the consequences of five high-rolling years when the system grew government as large as possible.

I faced a state budget deficit of nearly five billion dollars across two fiscal years.

I faced a federal government whose unfunded mandates and sweetheart deals were stealing Arizona's freedom and threatening to bankrupt our state.

Well, I did not blink; not for a minute. As a problem-solver, I knew I was up to the challenge.

When I began as Chairman of the Maricopa County Board of Supervisors, I encountered a local government bogged down so deeply in debt that it had utilized one hundred and sixty five million dollars in short-term borrowing -- just to meet cash flow.

At the end of my tenure in 2002, I left Maricopa County in one of the strongest financial positions of any county in the nation.

The financial turnaround was so good, that *Governing Magazine* proclaimed Maricopa County "one of the two best managed large counties in the nation."

State Government in Arizona spends 85 percent of the resources it receives supporting education, paying for health care and paying for public safety.

Unlike our Federal Government, we do not print money to support these core responsibilities.

Instead, we tax our citizens to support the common good: To create an educated society, to ensure an affordable level of health care and, most importantly, to secure public safety.

These are PRECISELY the same qualities that allow us to RETAIN companies and jobs – while we create an environment that's friendlier to business – and develop a FOCUSED statewide business attraction and retention strategy.

The Arizona Comeback began in earnest when I fought for – and won -- thanks to the help of courageous members of both parties in the State Senate and the State House – the right of the VOTERS to decide whether to raise the state sales tax by 1 percent over the next three years.

I've never voted to raise taxes in my entire career, but in 28 years in public service, I've learned one thing above all else: Doing the right thing almost always means doing the hard thing.

So, I will be a "YES" vote on Election Day, because it's the right thing to do.

IF we are to preserve the core functions of the Arizona we all love ...

-- IF we want to keep funding Arizona's K-12 education system at reasonable levels to keep class sizes manageable so teachers have time to spend with students to help them learn ...

-- IF we want to help our universities and community colleges -- faced with tuition increases of 15, 18, and 20 percent ...

-- IF we want to keep felons locked up ...

-- and IF we want to aid Arizona's poorest families with the help they desperately need ... then Proposition 100 MUST pass!

I emphasize, this is a TEMPORARY tax -- it will start on June 1st of this year, and come to a DEAD STOP at the end of the day on May 31, 2013, when it is automatically repealed from the law books.

I have been a truth teller my entire career. So, here's the truth: Without the revenue a "YES" vote will bring, these programs must be cut by more than one billion dollars immediately.

The damage done to education, and public safety would be far too great.

That's why Proposition 100 is the right thing to do. We need to restore stability, predictability and reliability to a system too long in turmoil. We are focused on getting Arizona back on track -- bolstering our base industries -- advancing our competitive position in the global economy.

Working with the Legislature, we have now permanently reduced state spending by over two billion dollars and returned state government to a size it can afford.

-- I have launched a Jobs Action Team -- Commerce -- State Land -- the Departments of Environmental Quality and Revenue -- are all working together to cut through red tape and speed what has been a slow government process.

-- I am committing ten million dollars of my discretionary funding -- through the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009 -- to establish a Job Training Assistance Program.

-- I am focused on a combination of regulatory and tax reforms.

-- For the long-term, we're re-thinking areas of our tax structure that unduly burden our employers -- particularly those requiring large capital investments, such as manufacturing.

-- The Arizona Department of Commerce is being replaced by a an authority governed by a private-sector led "Economic Advancement Board."

It will be focused on growing and diversifying our economy, and totally dedicate itself to creating and attracting more quality jobs for Arizonans.

Don Cardon continues as a guiding light in this reform, and he remains a vital asset in the preservation of the mission that the agency was created to fulfill.

We will now have a comprehensive approach – one for the 21st Century -- one yielding Focused Priorities -- Focused Investment – and Focused Efforts targeted on industries – such as solar, science, technology and aerospace and defense.

Last summer, I signed legislation creating the renewable energy tax incentive program. Companies are interested -- and they are coming to Arizona.

-- Suntech Power Holdings.

-- Tower Automotive.

... Are all part of Arizona's growing solar landscape ... and Bell Independent Power announced it will build a five mega-watt solar plant at the University of Arizona Tech Park -- including a first of its kind thermal storage system.

So, you tell me, are we starting to win?

You bet we are.

And, you are a part of that.

Fate has positioned Pinal County to be perfectly located to serve solar developers.

I recall three or four years ago when there was a massive 500kv power line siting going through the Corporation Commission, and many in Pinal County were worried about that this huge line that would be running through the county, instead of sticking to Maricopa county exclusively.

And today, while it is still a sore subject for many here, the fact is that with that line you have the unique opportunity to locate these power plants along it.

You are in a great position for building a number of utility scale power plants.

Your leaders have always figured out how to take the best advantage of the gifts that the County has.

This may be another opportunity --

We've attracted well over one billion dollars in capital -- twenty-five new companies or expansion projects -- yielding quality growth with more than twenty-four-hundred jobs.

What is so interesting in Pinal, is that your efforts in approving high quality master planned communities, while not yet blossoming in full flower, are certain to pay dividends as the Arizona Comeback continues to gain momentum.

So, we are pushing forward, setting in place policies that will encourage growth and create economic activity for Pinal.

My goal is to put this state, and Pinal county, the fastest growing county in our state, in the best position possible.

And -- now you know -- we are well on our way.

Thank you, God bless you and your families, God bless Pinal County and the great state of Arizona.